David Phinney
2847 Shirley Drive
Newbury Park, CA 91320

7/24/92

Dear David,

When you phoned this afternoon I'd started to take a nap but was not asleep. As I told you, I'd gotten only three hours sleep last night and was overly tired. When we finished talking an hour later I was so keyed up it was impossible for me to sleep. I tried. You were here toward the end of May so you have an idea of how feeble I am and of my medical problems and you know I'm going on 80. This and our conversation remain on my mind and as I thought more about it I decided to write you.

One reason is that I want no more of this. You were unthinking and you had no conern over what is good and not good for me. All you cared about is what you have in mind and as we talked you said you were paying attention to what I said but you were not. You argued without any consideration at all of what I was saying.

As I told you, just this week I rejected an offer from Thames TV, which would pay me, because I want no part of what they are doing. Like you, they have their opinion. I have my own and a different opinion.

In the past I refused to be on a CBS superspecial after spending several unpaid weeks working with them, including some of their top production people, although I had agreed to appear. What I learned of what they were doing led to my refusal to appear.

It has not been long since I told Nightline not to call me again, that I want no more to do with what they do.

Or, public attention means nothing to me. TV or anything else.

You have a high opinion of what you plan. I do not. I regard it as a "safe" copout formula that in addition is sterile and of no real public value. Merely rehashing on TV what is well known does not seem to me to be worthwhile and I know that for me it is not a way in which I want to spend any time at all. As I spelled out for you, at my age and in the state of my health, each thing I do is at the cost of something else I'll not be able to do. So, I decide how I'll spend what time remains for me.

In the almost two months since you were here you haven't learned anything at all about the basic and established fact about the JFK assassination and its investigations. You told me you'd read close to 50 books. When I said that was mostly wasted time you disagreed. This alone told me something about what you plan. As I told you from the first, as I tell everyone, and I can show you recent letters, I refuse to have anything to do with any shows that have anything to do with the multitude of assassination conspiracy theories. You plan some attention to them. By itself, and it is not by itself, this rules me out.Period!

Then you said you would have Belin and Ford. I'm not going into all the reasons for my firm, inflexible reason for having nothing to do with that and if you had learned, as you could have by this time, what you have to know to be able to do a responsible show

I'd not have to explain this in any event. I add only one thing to what I said: you can't do an honest show with Ford without going into what you are ignorant of that I doubt you could get aired. I certainly on this basis alone will have nothing to do with it. I'm sorry, David, but I'm not responsible for what you failed to try to learn while you were crapping around with all the nutty stuff.

What you described to me, no matter how you may change or modify it, boils down to a rehash of the 1966 arguments in 1992. I was part of them then. I will not be now and no matter how high an opinion you may have of that you will not change my mind of this either so please do not try.

At no point and in no way have you thought of the position your idea places me in and I think you do not really know enough to be able to.

Like all those who evolved the theories, you are overwhelmed by what you thought of and nothing else makes any difference to you. As I told you several times, you are entitled to do the kind of show you want and I am no less entitled to spend my time the way I want to and not the way I do not want to.

So, for these and for other reasons I do not now take time for when I should be getting into bed, but I want to get this off my mind and overwith, I will have nothing at all, in any way, no matter how slight, to do with your project. Please do not argue with me. I will have no more experiences like I had this afternoon with a man so wrapped up in himself he was incapable of even thinking that maybe he was abusing one of my age and my health problems.

Please do not phone me to argue. After this afternoon I'l just hang up and I do not want to do that. I just have no faith in your ability to behave in any other way and it is not in my interest to be subjected to that or even to have to think that perhaps I might be.

A bit of not unfriendly advice. You know your medium. I do not and do not pretend to.

But for anything to have any real worth it cannot begin with contempt for the intelligence of the audience and with the belief that if it is a picture they'll look at it. You have gotten this far in what you tell yourself is a serious and worthwhile project while as of now remaining not only ignorant of what is basic in it but more, you refused to even try to learn what is basic and instead spent your time with what ranges upward from trash to worthless scrimshaw.

You just do not know enough to be able to produce a responsible show on the JFK assassination and what you outlined to me isn't. In my opinion what you have in mind is not and cannot be. If you proceed, I wish you no bad luck, but from now on be clear in your mind, you proceed without me.

Sincerely,

Harold

Harold Weisberg